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PHILOLOGICAL STUDIES IN DEKKER'S

"IF THIS BE NOT A GOOD PLAY, THE DIVELL IS IN IT."

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THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL SATISFACTION OF THE REQUIREMENT

FOR THE DEGREE OF M. A.

IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA.

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Romaine Braden.

Berkeley, December, 1903.



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DEKKER'S LIFE. SKETCH OF.

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Dekker lived between 1567 and 1637, as he commenced to write in the early part of the decade of 1590-1600 and continued until 1637, when he drops out of sight.

What we know of Dekker is gathered from the entries in Henslowe's diary, and what he reveals of himself in his writings. From Henslowe's entries we judge that Dekker was a playwright of no mean ability. His plays were sought for at increasing prices, and he was paid earnest money for promised plays. He seems to have suffered the common fate of Elizabethan dramatists, by being in financial straits, as is evident from the loans entered by Henslowe, as well as the payments made to liberate Dekker from prison.

His character we may judge from his writings. Here he is a man of kindness and sympathy, of a jovial nature, and sweet in adversity. He seems to have been without vices. While aware of the follies and foibles existing in London he was not in sympathy with them. He, Dickens like, portrayed

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them, but cared not to reform as did Dickens. His characters who were evil were made to assume some goodness, or characters who were good prevailed against the evil, thus exhibiting his preference for the good. Religiously, he was a Protestant, but not a Puritan.

As a writer he essayed every literary vogue, and has left sonnets, prose tracts and dramas. He preferred characters in the lower and middle classes, and has given us the best pictures of London life, the interiors of shops, taverns and homes, and the customs and manners of the people.

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THE MOMENT.

An adequate understanding of the literary impetus of the time may be gained from the opinion of Brandes:-

"Every Englishman of talent in Elizabeth's time could write a tolerable play, just as every second Greek in the age of Pericles could model a tolerable statue, or as every European of to-day can write a passable newspaper article. Between 1557 and 1616 there were forty noteworthy and two hundred and thirty-three inferior English poets, who issued works in epic or lyric form; yet the characteristic of the period was the immense rush of productivity in the direction of dramatic art. The Englishmen of that time were born dramatists as the Greeks were born sculptors, and as we hapless moderns are born journalists." (1)

From this account we may readily infer that Dekker essayed the drama because of literary environment. The super-

⁽¹⁾ Georg. Brandes, William Shakespeare, published by Heineman, London, 1898; I. p. 128.

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natural was an old expedient of dramatists. The Elizabethan dramatists seemed to delight in recasting old devil stories into the form of drama. The several comedies which deal with the devil in human form attest the popularity of the theme.

It is to be remembered that the Elizabethan attitude towards the supernatural was different from that of the present
day. Magic was accepted in good faith. The idea that Satan
was the author of black art held credence. So the stories
that were prevalent in which the devil was prime mover in working of mischief were generally believed in by the credulous.
The existence of witchcraft was not denied.

The dramatists, with ready genius, adapted the supernatural as a motif in their art. They made use of devils, witches and fairies to illuminate human action. Marlowe had produced Faustus (1599); Greene, Grim the Collier of Croydon (1602) and Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay; Shakespeare made fairies the motive force in Midsummer Night's Dream, and the supernatural enveloped "The Tempest". The witches in Macbeth as "instruments of darkness" intensify the action. These same dramatists borrowed their plots — it was a natural outcome of the times. Borrowing economized their energy.

Marlowe borrowed from the old legend of Faust for his

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"Faustus". Greene caught his idea of the supernatural in drama from Marlowe, and dramatized Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay. Greene borrowed from Marlowe's Tamburlaine for his Alphonsus. Shakespeare took what was readiest at hand. His Midsummer Night's Dream bears traces of Greene's James IV. in the supernatural and fairy life. For his "Winter's Tale" he owes much to Greene's "Pandosta". When Dekker ventured into the realm of the supernatural the way had been paved for him by his predecessors.

The popularity of the devil drama must have waned somewhat by 1607, as Dekker says in his "Devil's Answer to Pierce Peniless":-

"That because 't is out a fashion to bring a Divell upon the Stage, he should (spite of his spitting fire and Brimstone) be a Divell in print." (1)

But when Dekker wrote If a fresh impetus had come for drama with the reopening of the London theatres after the plague of 1609, and Dekker, remembering the former popularity of this form of drama, sought to revive it. His prime motive, perhaps, is given in the Prologue, in the line:-

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⁽¹⁾ Dekker, Non-Dram.; Vol. 2, 95.

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"It is not Praise is sought for (Now) but <u>Pence</u>," and he thought a new devil drama the most productive. It was not out of place, as Jonson continued the theme in "The Devil is an Ass" (1616).

The play was prompted by the demand for drama; the response was given in the form most acceptable to the contemporary audience. This was a play whose enveloping atmosphere was the supernatural, whose characters were familiar personages in life and literature, whose action portrayed familiar pictures enlivened by gleams of humor which flashed amid the turmoil of follies.

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III.

SOURCES OF IF.

A. Medieval Legends.

In the study of the sources of <u>If</u> the student is confronted with the question, "Did Dekker invent or borrow his plot?" Recalling the origin of most of the old plays it is natural to suppose that he borrowed. Acting on this supposition, the next question is, "From whence did he draw his material for his plot?"

1. Review of Critics.

Critics have previously commented on the sources of this play and their opinions involve the question which of two stories Dekker used. The stories in question are, namely, (a.), that of Belphegor, by Machiavelli, and (b.), the old history of "Frier Rush". The <u>B</u>. theory seems to have its origin in a comment by Langbaine on the play. He says:-

 "The beginning of this play seems to be writ in imitation of Machiavelli's novel of Belphegor where Pluto summons the Devils to council."

The fact that Langbaine⁽¹⁾ credits only the beginning of the play to \underline{B} . does not deter the other advocates of the \underline{B} . theory from placing their reliance on Langbaine, and granting that \underline{B} . is the whole source of the play.

It is evident that Halliwell, (2) who states that <u>B</u>. is the source, did not investigate the source. The same may be said of Rhys⁽³⁾ and Grosart, (4) who quote Langbaine as authority. The more recent article by Miss Scott also attributes

⁽¹⁾ Gerard Langbaine's An Account of English Dramatick Poets, (1691); (Dekker. p. 221).

⁽²⁾ Halliwell's Dict. of Old English Plays: James O. Halliwell, John Russell Smith, Soho Square, London (1860); p. 125:
"If it be not good the Divel is in it. A new play as it hath been lately acted with great applause by the Queene's majestie's servants at the Red Bull; written by Thomas Decker, 4to (1612).

The principal plot of this piece is built on Machiavelli's marriage of Belphegor. The name is founded on a quibble, the Devil being the principal character in the play. Scene, Naples."

⁽³⁾ Thomas Decker, Ed. by Ernest Rhys, Mer. Ser. 1894.

⁽⁴⁾ Grosart, Mem. Intro. Dekker's Prose, Vol. I.

⁽⁵⁾ Mod. Lang. Assoc. Pub., Vol. X, p. 249, Elizabethan trans. from Italian.

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the source of \underline{If} to \underline{B} ., presumably acting on these previous comments.

However, Swinburne⁽¹⁾ deviates a little from the above criticisms, saying that "Grim the Collier of Croydon", by Greene, is perhaps more likely to have been Dekker's "immediate model, than the original by Machiavelli".

It was left to Herford (2) to look more carefully into the origin, and discredit B. as the source. His opinion, in turn, is concurred in by Ward (3) and Fleay. (4)

⁽¹⁾ Swinburne, 19th Century, 1887.

⁽²⁾ Herford, Literary Relations of Germany and England in 16th Century.

⁽⁵⁾ Ward, Eng. Dram. Lit. (Dekker): Ward, History of English Dramatic Literature, p. 465, Vol. II: "Its source is not as Langbaine supposed, Machiavelli's celebrated novella on the marriage of Belphegor, but, as Herford has incontrovertibly shown, the Pleasant History of Frier Rush. The opening scene . . . is taken directly from the English version of the old Northern legend, as also are the convent scenes; but Dekker added apparently from his own invention the doings of the emissaries of darkness at the court of Alphonso, King of Naples."

⁽⁴⁾ Fleay, Chron. of the Eng. Drama (Dekker): 1610 Christmas:—
"If this be not a good, etc. A new play lately acted by the Queen's men at the Red Bull. They accepted it when the Prince's men had rejected it at the Fortune, having already a play on Friar Rush. Date of writing was 1610, when Aug. 14 fell on a Tuesday; Sc. 8.

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with these varying opinions before us it seems essential to give the B. story serious consideration. The story was extant in England earlier than our play, as Greene undoubtedly used B. in his play of Grim the Collier of Croydon. There was no English translation of B. earlier than 1647.

Greene, being a University man, likely read Italian. There is no proof that Dekker knew Italian, so he could only have used the B. story second-hand. It is more probable that Dekker would use material readiest at hand. There were stories available in English and such as would be novel in drama.

A brief outline of the \underline{B} . story will give sufficient knowledge on which to base an opinion as to whether or not the \underline{B} . theory is a flimsy one.

2. Outline of the Story of Belphegor. (2)

Pluto and his demons heard many complaints from the spirits arriving in the lower world, about the evils of marriage that it brought great unhappiness. The judges of the infer-

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⁽¹⁾ The Divell a Married Man. Trans. from Italian of Belphegor by Machiavelli, 1647 (Brit. Mus. Cat.).

⁽²⁾ From Roscoe's Italian Novelists, Vol. II (1825).

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nal regions resolved upon a committee of inquiry. They decided to send an emissary to earth to ascertain the truth of these grievous reports. Belphegor was chosen by lot, as the emissary. He was instructed to go in human form, to enter society, to marry, and live as a human being for ten years.

He was furnished with ample means and took a position in high society as Roderigo. His marriage proved unhappy; his wife was vain and extravagant and made exorbitant demands on He became involved in debt and was finally comhis purse. pelled to flee to escape creditors. Roderigo took refuge with Mateo, and made a pact with him that in return for his protection he. Roderigo, would make Mateo rich. - in this way: Roderigo was to possess the daughters of rich men. Mateo was to conjure Roderigo out, and receive the rewards of grateful On the third occasion Roderigo declined to obey parents. Mateo, but was finally outwitted by a clever strategy of Ma-He prepared a great celebration and told Roderigo it was in honor of his wife who was coming for him. Roderigo immediately departed, preferring his Satanic abode to any further matrimonial yoke, while Mateo rejoiced over the victory he had achieved.

Such, in brief, is the story, and there is no difficulty

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in seeing that the play bears no resemblance to the story.

3. No Relation Between B. and If.

An examination for similarity of names and details reveals the fact that they are wholly lacking, unless we except the traditional name of Pluto.

Taking up Langbaine's statement it is to be noticed he comments only on the beginning of the play as being "writ in imitation of B." The beginning of the play is a council of demons. The Novella also opens with the council of demons; but when the councils are compared they are found not to be alike. Take the council in the Novella: the spirits arriving in Hades in infinite numbers, make such grievous complaints about the evils of marriage that a committee of inquiry is resolved upon. Belphegor is chosen by lot, after dignified deliberation, and is sent to test the truth of these reports about marriage. While, in the play, Pluto listens to Charon's tavern-like grumbling about fares being scarce, -

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Pluto selects three demons and peremptorily sends them to earth to corrupt society and thereby recruit Hades. This

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slight scrutiny shows that the accounts differ in the occasions of the councils; the manner of conducting them; the methods of appointing emissaries to earth, one by lot, the other by command; the purposes for which the emissaries are sent. the one to test the happiness of marriage, the other to corrupt society. Belphegor in no case devotes himself to corrupting society, and that is the whole purpose of Dekker's trio of demons. Belphegor, through his unhappy marriage, failed to serve his ten years. The play demons succeeded in corrupting, and made reports at the appointed time. gor, as a result of his mission, was to report the happiness or unhappiness of marriage; the play demons were to bring recruits to Hades. The only suggestion of a resemblance between the stories of B. and If seems to be in sending of a devil to earth in human form. This was a familiar feature of other stories, (1) and, hence, the source of such a motif would not be limited to B. and could have been taken from some other story as well. If there had been any borrowing from B. Dekker would have taken more than this one feature.

⁽¹⁾ Devil's Dinner Party (Ingoldsby Legends);
Lay of St. Megard (Ingoldsby Legends);
Faust Legend;
The Disobedient Child (Thomas Ingelend).

(4) Probability of the Control of and the graph of the second of and the second second The control of the co

The \underline{B} . story is purely a satire on marriage. There is nothing further to be considered in the \underline{B} . story, and, leaving the question settled that \underline{B} . cannot be the source, and that Langbaine's statement is a presumption without proof, we will now look to the story of Friar Rush for resemblances.

4. The Rush Story in England.

In Herford's suggestions about the Rush story he mentions several versions of this story, namely, a Danish version, High German and Saxon, as well as the English one. He says all these agreed in substance but differed in style. There being, then, several versions extant before and during Dekker's time, the question arises which would he probably use in selecting the main plot for his play. We know that Dekker was not an investigator. We also know he wrote hurriedly, and in such event the borrowing of plots economized his energy. He would most likely choose the most available material for his fancy. It is reasonable to suppose that he would use an English version of a story.

The story of Friar Rush was common property in England before Dekker wrote at all. There is an entry in the Stationer's Register, 1568-69, which reads:-

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"Recyved of John Alde for his lycense for pryntinge of a boke intituled ffreer R U S S H E iiijd."

Then, later, Edward Alde, the son of John Alde, printed in 1620 a book entitled:-

"THE HISTORIE OF FRIER RUSH". -

"How he came to a House of Religion to seek service, and being entertained by the Priour, was first made under cooke."

This latter being printed by the same family and publishing house as the 1568 edition, it is reasonable to suppose the 1620 edition to be a reprint of the 1568 edition. As this story existed in London from 1568 to 1620. it would be accessible to dramatists, and consequently to Dekker, in 1610.

This reprint (1) is included in Thom's Early Prose Romances, and is the version which I use in tracing the source of the play. "If this be not a good play, the Devill is in it."

5. Outline of the "Historie of Frier Rush".

Briefly, the Rush story opens with the prince of devils noting that a certain religious house is in a state of mis-

⁽¹⁾ Also in Morley's Early Romances.

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rule, and calls a council of demons to determine how to keep the friars in this state. The demons despatch an emissary. Rush, to earth, to dwell in human form in a convent. is received by the Prior and given a position as under-cook. In consequence of a quarrel he murders the master-cook by throwing him in a kettle of hot water. and. unsuspected. is himself installed. He enters upon a career of tempting the friars with delicious fare, and succeeds in causing them to forget their religious obligations on fastdays. After seven years' service he is made a brother friar. He plots continual mischief and brings about a brawl among the monks. and plays the innocent. He plays other tricks on the unsuspecting friars, and aids them in leading an irreligious life. His Satanic character is at last discovered at the tryst of demons in the forest, which is accidentally overheard by a terrified farmer who had sought refuge in a tree while overtaken by night, in quest of his cow which had been killed by Rush; Rush makes his report of corrupting the convent. and the farmer reports him next day as a Devil to the astonished Rush is forthwith expelled from the friary, and after various experiences as a servant has the Prior called to conjure a demon out of a gentleman's daughter. The Prior

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makes use of him to carry lead to roof the church, then commands him to dwell in an old remote castle for all time.

An outline of the story of \underline{If} will aid in understanding the relation of \underline{If} to \underline{R} ., and will be of general use through this paper.

6. Outline of the Story of If.

- (Sc.) Pluto and his demons hold a council and, desiring to recruit Hades, they decide to send three emissaries, Ruffman, Lurchall and Rush, to earth to corrupt society in court, city, and friary, respectively. They are to report at a tree in a grove near Naples.
- (Sc.) Alphonso, King of Naples, is newly crowned and discusses with his courtiers the future greatness of his reign. He plans duties for each day in the week, until Saturday is reached; then Ruffman is announced as Bohor and induces the King to give Saturday to pleasure. Erminhild, the betrothed of the King, arrives.
- (Sc.) Shacklesoule, as Rush, enters a friary and is made assistant to cook. As a novice, he says grace. He tempts their appetites with portrayals of delicious fare and thus ingratiates himself, and is appointed master cook.

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- (Sc.) The King and courtiers are entertained with sports prepared in response to the King's proclamation. Bohor leads the King further in pursuit of pleasure, and he dismisses his bride and orders her sent home to the Duke, her father. But she leaves the court.
- (Sc.) Lurchall has become apprentice to Barterville, a merchant, and the receiver of tribute money. Barterville plans to cheat men. These men propose to enter suit in the Chancellor's Court.
- (Sc.) The friars, except the Subprior, have become irreligious. They work among their grape vines on a feast day. Rush tells a story on Scumbroth who loses his place. The Subprior proposes to complain to the King.
- (Sc.) Rush calls up Glitterbacke, the golden head, who showers gold. Rush then tempts the Subprior with gold. The Subprior gives the gold to Scumbroth.
- (Sc.) The King holds court and hears complaints against Barterville, who perjures himself, and his office is given to Bohor and Spendola. Octavio brings in petitions from poor subjects, but the pleasure-bent King disdains to hear them. The Subprior complains of his friary and the King bestows the convent and its belongings on Brisco, another courtier. An

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alarm of war is given, as the Duke demands his daughter who can not be found. But the King does not heed the warning, as he wishes nothing to stay the "spring-tyde pleasures" planned by his favorite. Bohor.

- (Sc.) Barterville disguises himself as a Turk and plans deeds of dishonesty and intends to loan the King money. Barterville plans to feign illness and to call a friar. Scumbroth, beggared, seeks refuge in a tree in a forest and is a witness to the tryst of demons. The three emissaries report their progress. Scumbroth is astonished at Rush being a demon. They are sent on further mischief.
- (Sc.) Rush tempts the Subprior with dancing girls, but without success. Erminhild comes, gives ring and message to the Subprior to give to her father. She is cared for by the Subprior. Alarms and drums are heard in the distance.
- (Sc.) The King and some courtiers are pursued and scatter in fear. The courtiers go to Barterville's house. Ruffman tempts the King to commit suicide, but does not prevail. The King dons the habit of a friar for disguise and safety. Barterville hides the courtiers in his cellar and sends Lurchall to tell the Calabrian Duke that he will betray them for the reward. The King enters disguised as a friar and learns



of Barterville's meanness. The Calabrian takes the courtiers and goes to find the King.

- (Sc.) Soumbroth tells the Subprior of the tryst, and of the Prior's death by choking on a grape.
- (Sc.) Barterville comes to convent as a friar, and the King comes disguised as a friar. The Duke of Calabria comes to abbey with soldiers. King reveals himself. Subprior restores Erminhild. King repents; burns priory and friars, except the Subprior.
- (Sc.) In Hades Barterville is punished alongside Fawkes and Ravillac. Pluto and judges call a session and round up so many recruits that they ask Charon to not bring more, and finally defer the session because Hades is so full of Puritans.

7. Resemblances of If to R.

In the play Charon, the traditional ferryman, arouses Pluto to action by his complaints, and it is his saying:-

p. 267. "T' uphold hells Kingdome, more must worke then one"
that is the keynote to the treble plot, a response to the
popular demands of the contemporary audience. Dekker expands the play into three threads, - Court, City, and Friary,

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p. 347. society, by their own admission -

"of hell three spirits we are, sent to catch souls for Pluto, our Prince and Master",

and this is the same motif that exists in the romance.

We will first consider the Rush thread, in particular, and its relation to the Rush romance. The Romance says:-

Romance— "They chose a divell to goe and dwell among these reli-Chap. 1. gious men for to maintain them longer in their ungracious living, which divell was put in rayment like an earthly

In the play Pluto commands:-

Play-

"Shacklesoule wear thou

p. 269.

creature. *

A Frier's grave habit . . "

" . . Fly Shacklesoule . .

To the Friery.

Best famde in Naples for strict orders; throw
What nets thou seest can catch them; amongst 'em sow
Seedes of contention, or what ever sin

They most abhor, sweate thou to bring that in."

Here both devils are chosen, both sent to convents, both in human form and garb, both instructed in their task of cor-

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rupting the friars. In alluding to the convent, Dekker diverges a little from the romance, where the devil is to "maintain them the longer in ungracious living", as, in the play, he speaks of a friary "Best famde . . . for strict orders". The ground in the romance is already contaminated, while the ground in the play is new in regard to the convent. Dekker has in view the dramatic effect, for the more the devil can accomplish, the more room for action in the play; or, on the other hand, the obstacles the devil would encounter would give rise to dramatic action. These two ideas come out in the refectory scene, and in the character of the Subprior.

Chap. 1. In the romance the Prior "espied Rush the young man", and brought him in. In the play he first appears as the "Junior novice". So in both plots the devil takes the form of a young man - for, as such, he could the more readily obtain service. They are assigned to like tasks, assistant to the master cook. In the romance the "devill became under-Cooke in the place that he was assigned unto", and he exulted to himself, "now all my intent is fulfilled, and I doubt not but all shall be ours". He purposed to be "in great love and favor among them". The play introduces Shacklesoule as Rush in the p. 280.

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of assistant by Friar Alphege:-

"You must be nimble. Rush

- p. 280. . . . So; the Lord Priors napkin here, there the Subpriors: his knife and case of tooth-picks thus: . .
 - . . . Ply your office, Rush."

Rush exults to himself as in the romance, as he replies:
p. 281. *Thankes good Frier Alphege: yes, Shacklesoule will

play (ply)

The task hee's set to: Divels never idle lye:
'Frier Rush!' ha. ha!"

In the romance Rush receives a beating at the hands of the master cook and retaliates by throwing the cook into a "kettle of water seething on the fire" and so slays him; but was not suspected of the murder. Dekker here averts tragedy to make comedy; he does not have Rush murder the cook, but saves the cook for further use in comic situations. Dekker substitutes a lie for a murder. Rush quarrels with the cook, as he tells a slanderous story on Scumbroth who is dismissed. The romance idea of the cook in the kettle is turned to an-

p. 309. other use: Scumbroth, in his wrath, says:-"I le make him to know what 't is to boile a cooke ins own grease".

(4) Problem of Malegoria and Control of the Cont

To fill the vacancy occasioned by the cook's death, the Prior commanded that Rush should be made cook. It is related:-

chap. 3. "Thus Rush became maister Cooke in the kitchen, and dressed their meate mervailous well; for in the Lent, and in the Advent, both Fridays and also other dayes, he put bacon into their pottage pot, the which made the pottage to savour well, and he dressed their meate so deliciously, that the Priour and all the friers had great mervaile that he did it so well: in so much that they said he did much better then their other maister Cooke did"

Rush is then made a brother friar among them as a reward for his services. Dekker makes another dramatic adjustment and has Rush a novice at the first. As a novice, he is to render thanks as they stand around the table. Rush fairly overwhelms the ascetic monks with rendering of thanks for a most sumptuous fare:-

p. 281. *For our bread, wine, ale and beere,

For the piping hot meates heere:

For brothes of sundrie tasts and sort.

For beefe, veale, mutton, lamb and porke. (1)
Greene-sauce with calfes head and bacon,
Pig and goose, and cram'd-up capon.
For past raiz'd stiffe with curious art.

and so on, through an appetizing list of eatables increasing in deliciousness, until the "oyster pyes, Butterd Crab", and "lobster thighs" brings forth an indignant protest - when the dinner is only herbs and water.

But the crafty Rush has succeeded in arousing their starved appetites. The burst of wrath is not genuine. It is too much of a contrast to the accustomed "meager contemplation". Rush feigns ignorance, pleading he thought they lived as at other convents. He pursues his task vigorously, and argues so well that -

p. 283. "he that feeds well hath a good soul",
the entrapped Prior exclaims ardently, "Rush, thou art some angel."

⁽¹⁾ Two lines are similar to two lines in the Disobedient Child (1560), by Thomas Ingelend (Per. Soc.):

"For there must be bought byefe, veale and mutton,

With pigge, geese, conyes and capon."

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The Prior here, as in the romance, says:-

p. 284. "Rush be our maister-cooke?"

They all agree, and the Prior commands:-

"Give Rush his charge then; Scumbroth, you must resign."

The prayer does not exist in the romance, but there is the same subtle motive in corrupting with rich fare. Dekker turns from practical demonstration to possibilities of delicious fare. In both accounts it is the Prior who becomes enthusiastic over Rush. An antipathy exists between Prior and Subprior in the romance, and brings on a brawl through the subtle connivance of Rush. In the play the Subprior morally opposes the Prior's tendency to laxity and anything irreligious or contrary to monastic life. The moral opposition is adapted for presentation in comedy, while a violent outburst of wrath, and a fight, would not be.

The romance relates that Rush made truncheons for defense in case of need, and these aroused a fighting tendency and

Chap. 4. suggested a mode of revenge to the opposing factions, and consequently a great fight ensued among the monks one night. Rush aided, unknown, but appeared later with the represent:-

"Fie. for shame. sirs; how fortuned this discord to fall

among yourselves. "

This scene is touched upon in the play when Rush speaks of Nicodeme and Silvester who had quarreled:-

p. 303. "They brawled and struck but I kept off the blows
Yet the Subprior sales from me their quarrel rose".

Both the Priors had convivial tastes. The romance relates that when Rush and the Prior went on a journey, and, stopping at an inn "the Prior called for wine of the best, and anon he had his commandment. In the play Scumbroth reports of the Prior:-

p. 342. *Wine has kild the Lorde Pryor: he would

in a braverie taste the liquor of our Vines".

On the journey Rush fell into disfavor, for "Frier Rush never went forth agains with his master". He was also made Sexton, but was put out of office, back into the kitchen; so he stumbled upon some opposition in the romance.

In the play the virtuous Subprior continually opposes
Rush. In place of playing tricks, Rush tempts the Subprior,
who, however, is proof against wine, gold and dancing girls.
Dekker chooses to leave out the kobold element and to put in
a serious element centered in the Subprior. The tavern
scene where Rush drank - and played at game so late he forgot

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p. 325. his duties for a time - is suggested when Scumbroth presents himself beggared by gambling. Both were cooks of a convent. and had gambled late.

Naturally a reckoning time would occur for the evil workers. Both stories have accounts of a meeting of demons presided over by Lucifer. These are identical, in that the reports were given under a tree in which a man had taken refuge, being overtaken by night in the forest, and who later turned informer. The romance has it that a farmer who lost his cow, through Rush, took refuge at night in a hollow tree, and while

Chap. there witnessed the tryst, for -

"Anon there assembled a company of Devils, and among them they had a great principall maister whose name was Lucifer."

Rush made his report of work in the religious place:-

"I governe the priour and his convent as I will myselfe" - which the farmer hears in great trepidation.

p. 526. The tryst of the play is held under a ewe tree blasted by goblins. Prodigal Scumbroth seeks refuge in the forest and accidentally climbs into the same tree. In laughable discomfort he overhears the reports, and discovers -

"Frier Rush amongst 'em".

Lucifer demands. -

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"Has Rush byen idle?"

Rush reports:-

"I am fishing for a whole schoale of Friers

. . . Theres onely one Lambe scapes my killing,

But I will have him: then theres a cook -

. . . Of whom I some revenge have tooke".

This scene is given a humorous turn, with Soumbroth as eavesdropper - another digression for the sake of comedy.

In the romance the eavesdropping farmer prays for safety, and later turns informer. He reports Rush as a devil to the astonished and conscience-stricken Prior. Rush is summarily dismissed from the convent, and the firars live afterwards in peace and chastity.

p. 342. Scumbroth is cleverly afforded an opportunity for revenge, as he turns informer and reports to the Prior that Rush is a demon. In both cases the informer is a person who has suffered loss at Rush's hands, Scumbroth his position, the farmer his property. As the Prior in the play dies, the Subprior becomes the head. So in both instances it is the Prior of the convent who leads in the efforts at reclaiming; and the devil does not secure them as recruits for Hades.

To sum up the relation of the play, "If this be not a

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good play, the Devil is in it", to the romance, "The Historie of Frier Rush", we will consider in both stories the following points as being the same:-

Enveloping atmosphere of the supernatural.

The fundamental conception is the sending of a devil in human form to earth to corrupt society.

A council of demons decides to send an emissary to earth.

He is to go in human form and garb.

He is instructed in his mission.

He is to dwell in a particular convent.

He is to corrupt.

He goes to seek service in this convent.

He is named Rush.

Rush enters the convent.

Rush is appointed assistant to the cook.

Prior is enthusiastic over Rush.

Rush made master cook by the Prior.

Rush corrupts with delicious fare.

Rush is a brother in the order.

Rush gains in great favor.

Rush not suspected by friars of being a devil.

Rush meets opposition.

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Rush displays subtle craftiness about the brawl.

The cook displaced by Rush.

Antipathy between Prior and Subprior.

Tryst of demons.

Place under a tree in the forest.

Lucifer presides.

Rush and other demons report deeds of corrupting.

Rush reports his work in the priory.

Rush discovered to be a devil.

Tryst witnessed by man in the tree.

Eavesdropper by accident.

Eavesdropper turns informer.

Informer had suffered through Rush.

Rush reported to Prior as a demon.

Prior not lost to virtue.

Devil comes out second best.

8. R. the Source of the Plot, and of the Friary Thread of the Triple Plot of If.

It would not be possible for two authors in different periods to have written two accounts coinciding in so many instances, unless one borrowed from the other. It leaves

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no doubt that Dekker drew his conception of the plot of the play from the Historie of Frier Rush.

The convent life forms one of the threads of the treble plot. Nonks had long been a subject of common satire, and Dekker continued the theme and pleased the Protestant element by weaving the old legend into a threefold plot, and having Rush the motive force in his Friary thread.

B. Contemporary Literature, History, and Life.

The remainder of this topic, sources, will be the attempt to show the influence of contemporary history and life in London, on Dekker in the writing of this play; also his indebtedness to classical tradition, contemporary writers, and to his previous writings.

1. The Times, a Sketch of.

Dekker saw the close of the reign of Elizabeth and the beginning of that of James I.

The crown adhered to the Divine Right of Kings, exercised the kingly prerogative in making loans, created nobility, and prorogued Parliament at will.





The clergy vied for power, - Catholics, Puritans, Dissenters; and the Established Church struggled, the Church of England to maintain supremacy, and the others for rights. Eoclesiastical favors were sold, and good scholars forbidden to teach and preach. James I., brought up a Dissenter, adhered to the Episcopal church as a power to uphold his throne. Yet he raised an alarm by his favorable attitude at one time, towards Catholics.

Under these contending conditions plots were instigated against James I. (1) and the government; although unsuccessful, they showed the tendencies of the times.

The life in London was not free from corruption. Gambling, cheating, bribing, were engaged in by various classes. Usurers extorted money. Prisoners were held for debt. Vice was licensed, with some restrictions on Sunday.

In literature, Shakespeare was at his zenith, Jonson had entered upon his career of comedy. Fletcher, Massinger, Ford and Dekker were giving of their dramatic genius. In spite of Puritan censors the stage was popular. Drama was in de-

^{(1) 16 -} Plot to seize James I.; Lingard, Vol. VII. 1605 - Gunpowder Plot - 16





mand, and the incentive to a dramatist was alluring, aside from remuneration, however needed. The whole of London formed a stage from which the dramatists picked their players to expose, satirize, ridicule and compliment. Their efforts were daring, but they pandered to the tastes of the pleasure—loving audiences by giving them scenes more or less familiar.

The impetus to Dekker in portraying these scenes of London may be explained by a letter of the times:-

"I will now, in good sooth, declare to you, who will not blab, that the gunpowder fright is got out of all our heads, and we are going on, hereabouts, as if the devil was contriving every man should blow up himself, by wild riot, excess and devastation of time and temperance." (1)

Gabriel Harvey also says:-

"The Divell was never such a knave as now". (2)

Dekker followed the bent of prose writers in his tracts against vice, and has adapted the same denunciations in his drama.

⁽¹⁾ Letter of Sir John Harrington to Mr. Secretary Barlow.

⁽²⁾ Pierce's Supererogation.



2. The Court Thread

The Friary thread merges with the other two threads in the play. The city and court afforded scenes more familiar to the contemporary audience than those in a sequestered convent.

We will next consider the court thread of the play. The motif in this is the devil in human form and garb, in society, for the purpose of corrupting. He, here too, has been assigned to a definite place and class - the court. A devil had gone to court -

"As a pere in a parlamente,"
in the old Towneley play of "The Judgment"; so Dekker's idea
of a devil at court is not a new one.

In considering this thread, the court, it is well to bear in mind that Dekker wrote at a time in the history of comedy when the dramatists wielded their pens in satiric attacks against society foibles, and included personal thrusts against their enemies. In political life England was irritated by the foreign rule, and James I. was the object of satirical flings. (1)

⁽¹⁾ Eastward Hoe; Act III, Sc. 2.

In view of the fact that James I. had been an object of some satire, I wish to compare the character and environment of Alphonso in <u>If</u>, with that of James I. as given in contemporary history.

a. Character and Environment of King Alphonso in If.

King Alphonso is weak in character, conceited, pedantic, arrogant, and void of personal dignity. He is young, newly crowned and surrounded by favorites. He adheres to the "Divine Right of Kings" and exercises his royal prerogative at will. In the beginning he makes professions of making his reign a great one, pardons conspirators, and assigns tasks. But the love of pleasure causes him to disregard duty. He dismisses the petitions of poor subjects and sends his bride away. He is a "swan turned crow". Beset with wars, he needs to borrow money. He bestows favors on courtiers in the way of office and property. The father of his bride besieges him, and he repents. The King destroys the convent and corrupt friars.

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b. Character and Environment of James I.

According to contemporary history James I. was weak in He was pedantic, conceited and arrogant. character. He adhered to the "Divine Right of Kings". He exercised the royal prerogative at will. prorogued parliament. and nego-He was devoted to pleasure, disregarded aftiated loans. fairs of state, and proved an incapable monarch. He was alarmed by insurrections. He bestowed favors on courtiers. Duc de Sully characterized him as "the wisest fool in Europe". He was not old and his reign was comparatively new. He neglected his queen for pleasure. He commuted the sentence of conspirators, and exiled the seminary priests (1605).

Such, in general, are the environments and characters of the two kings. Comparing these two accounts it is readily seen that there is a striking resemblance between the two characters, Alphonso of If, and James I.

o. James I. Satirized.

The theory that Dekker had in mind James I. when he portrays Alphonsus, has not been advanced, to my knowledge. But the historical pictures of James I., and the latitude

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granted dramatists, makes it probable that Dekker would make a venture at satire. Others had done it, as already mentioned. An extract from a history of the times may serve to show that James I. would be an incentive to a ready wit to satirize and please the irritated English people:-

"On the sixth of May, 1603, after a stately progress through his new dominions, King James entered London. In outer appearance no sovereign could have jarred more utterly against the conception of an English ruler which had grown up under Plantagenet or Tudor. His big head, his slobbering tongue, his quilted clothes, his rickety legs, stood out in as grotesque a contrast with all that men recalled of Henry or Elizabeth, as his gabble and rhodomontade, his want of personal dignity, his buffoonery, his coarseness of speech, his pedantry, his personal cowardice". (1)

It was a fashion of the day for dramatists to be daring in their representations on the stage. An extract from a court letter of the period says:-

"The players do not forbear to present upon their stage the whole course of this present time - not sparing either king, state or religion - in so great absurdity and with such

⁽¹⁾ History of the English People; Greene, Vol. I, III.

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"liberty, that any would be afraid to hear them." (1)

Since this was the case, it can easily be inferred that very little escaped these ready-witted dramatists which they could weave into comedy.

The picture of the king, drawn in the play, represents him as devoted to pleasure through the influence of a worthless favorite - a devil disguised as a courtier.

The name "King Alphonsus" suggests Greene's Alphonsus, King of Arragon. Greene's Alphonsus is weak in character, and void of personal nobility and grandeur, which should distinguish dramatic heroes. He, too, is newly crowned. This resembles the play when the demon, Ruffman, is sent to the court of King Alphonso and is told there is. -

"A Prince there newly crowned aptly inclinde
To any bendings."

But further than having the same name and general character, and being newly crowned, the identity of these two kings does not exist.

The allusion to a prince newly crowned fits the character of James. Dekker would not be so bold as to render

⁽¹⁾ Aiken's Life of James I., Vol. I, p. 227.

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James conspicuous by naming the king "James"; and the name "Alphonso" was known to play-goers.

Throwing the glamour of a familiar dramatic personage about his king, Dekker brings in the chief characteristics of James I. which were irritating, and further suggests him by reproducing his own acts - as the instances of liberating the conspirators, and exiling the priests.

The royal scene opens on the coronation day of King Alphonso. The king is gracious and affable toward his courtiers, and magnanimous in the assignment of daily tasks.

King Alphonso sets apart each day in the week for special tasks:-

On Monday he will act as judge.

On Tuesday, hear petitions.

On Wednesday, treat with embassadors.

On Thursday, have military drills.

On Friday, visit the reverend schools.

But. Saturday is to be for pleasure.

In these tasks Dekker incorporates some of the virtues and vices of the day. He commands the hospitals, schools, and army; he condemns the pettifogging lawyer, bribes and simony.

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Alphonso is in a commendable mood when the sprightly devil comes in disguised as Bohor. The king weakly yields to the influence of the worthless Helvetian, who ingratiates himself by flattery. James I., too, was in character "weak, cowardly, fanatical, superstitious and influenced by worthless favorites".

In the play the king pardons the "bold conspirators" and "Traytors". -

p. 273. "Their bond is canceld. I forgive the debt,

See that at liberty they all be set".

All of London was familiar with the royal reputation and proceedings in court life. James I. had a puerile devotion to pleasure. He indulged his taste to the exclusion of attention to affairs of state. His court was filled with favorites, and he yielded to their influence in disregard of duty. He had a "Court of Requests", which figured more in name than as an actual mode of redress. He had the magnanimity to commute the sentence of Markham, Cobham, and Grey, the three conspirators tried and condemned for the crime of seizing James I. in order to compel him to accede to demands.

Aiken says of him:-

"Towards his courtiers he overflowed with affability and

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"good nature".

but refuses. with -

Lingard⁽¹⁾ says that James First's ministers begged him to give more attention to public business; but questions of material importance remained unnoticed. The king replied he did not intend to make himself a slave.

p. 317. Alphonso is besought by Octavio with petitions: "If now thou art a just King, keepe thy word,
 With thy poore subjects", -

"Vex me no more".

Then again, King Alphonso is a borrower of money. He negotiates with Barterville for loans. James exercised his kingly prerogative in forced loans when the royal purse needed replenishing. (2) Alphonso's summary disposition of the convent and friars suggests the time that James exiled the Jesuit and Seminary priests in 1604.

The frequent allusions to tobacco is a reminder of James'

⁽¹⁾ Lingard's History of England; Vol. VII, VIII.

⁽²⁾ Gardiner's History of England: Actual receipts fell below estimates by £6000.

Aiken's Life of James I.:

"James recurred to the illegal and oppressive mode of raising money by privy seals, that is, forced loans."

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hatred of tobacco smokers. He hated them as he hated the Puritans, (1) and wrote his famous "Counterblast to Tobacco" (1607).

The following allusions in the play If, to Alphonso, may be aptly construed as applicable to James. Octavio speaks of the -

p. 288. " . . . Ship of sway

And kingly ventures, . . .

. . (beaten by the stormes

Of youthfull follie, raging in monstrous formes). *

Again, the petitioner, "Far.", addresses the king as, -

p. 316. "Sweete yong King".

Octavio says to Alphonso:-

p. 287.

"This is that booke of statutes, were enacted
In the high Parliament of thy roiall thoughts
Where wisedome was the speaker. And because
Thy subjects shall not be abusde by lawes
Wrap'd up in caracters, crabbed and unknowne,
These thine owne language speake."

⁽¹⁾ Knight's History of England.

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This passage calls to mind James' own work. (1)

James,

p. 478. even before his accession to the English throne, had

formulated his theory of rule in a work on "The True Law of

Free Monarchy", and announced that, -

"Although a good King will frame his actions to be according to law yet he is not bound thereto, but of his own will,"

when Scumbroth overhears Ruffman report at the tryst:
p. 327.

"Ith Court of Naples have I prospred well,

And brave soules shall I shortly ship to hell.

In sensuall streames, Courtier and King I ha crownde," -

"Are there gentlemen divels too? this is one of those, who studies the black Art, thats to say, drinkes

Tobacco.*

Scumbroth savs:-

The terms of "black Art" and "Tobacco" probably allude to James' study of Demonology, and his hatred of tobacco already mentioned.

The Subprior complains of his priory, -

p. 318. "Their sinnes grow hye, and fearefull, and strike at Heaven.

⁽¹⁾ Greene, J. R.: History of the English People.

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"Punish them T H O U , whose power from thence is given," and his words show the belief in the Divine Right of Kings, so adhered to by James.

The king, pressed hard by the enemy, exclaims, -

. . "If the Lion must fall

Fall shall he like a Lion."

Scumbroth tells the Subprior he will go. -

p. 345. "To see more throates cut, and Execution certaine Gallants is this morning".

James I. had sentenced subjects to the block, on slight causes. and it brought him censure.

Another similarity is noted in the character Octavio, the uncle of Alphonso and a courtier, to Octavio Baldi, a favorite courtier of James I. This Octavio had warned James of a plot to poison him, before he became king, and so gained his favor.

Bohor comes as an Helvetian, to the court, and this incident may have some bearing on the fact that James I. had, a few years before, ended the war with Spain that Elizabeth was carrying on, and in 1611 was negotiating for the marriage of his son Charles to a Spanish princess.

The several similar instances make it probable that

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James I. was the object of Dekker's wit, and it was nothing unusual, if we may judge from accounts of the times.

Lingard⁽¹⁾ says that the players satirized James I. for his love of the chase and the pleasures of the table.

Aiken further relates that:-

"In fact it was never the custom of James I. to visit with severity failures in respect due to his person, . . . and his genuine love of wit pleaded strongly in behalf of literary offenders".

Dekker alludes to James I. in his dialogue between Westminster and London. on their sins. as:-

"My best, my most worthy, most Princely, and my most desired Lover". (2)

He mentions in the same "That Royall Maister of us both", and speaks of "his Royall word".

Because James I. had been satirized by others, and Dekker had made him the object of satirical flings in his Dead Tearme, and because King Alphonso in <u>If</u> bears a striking resemblance to James I. in character and environment, and so

⁽¹⁾ Lingard's History of England; Vol. VII, VIII.

^{(2) &}quot;The Dead Tearme", 1608. (London to Westminster, p. 60.) Dekker's Non-Dram. Works, Vol. IV.

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many allusions in <u>If</u> apply to James' temperament, actions, manner of governing, and estimate by his subjects, - it is not difficult to infer that Dekker intended to satirize James I. in his play of If.

James I. had his virtues as well as faults. He was for a time the "Swan turned crow".

Dekker treats most of his characters by hanging them, as it were, over the brink of an abyss of evil and destruction for a time, and then drawing them back into virtuous safety. And so he treats this character of the king. In the end the king is complimented by being given admirable qualities, and this would relieve the bitterness of any satire that might have been aimed at James I.

d. The Romantic Element.

The romantic element is the only serious one in the play, and belongs to the court thread. The heroine, Erminhild, comes into the court life bearing about her all the charm of modest womanhood that Greene gives his heroines. The treatment accorded her is similar to that given Fausta, the wife of Amurack, in Greene's Alphonsus. Erminhild, who came as queen, is banished from the court, and so is Fausta. The

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pleasure-burdened Alphonsus commands:-

"Send her home to the duke her father".

Octavio compassionately says to Erminhild:-

p. 308. "Tis crueltie too much, and too much shame

That one of your high birth, youth, beautie, name,

And vertues shining bright, should hence be sent

Compare this with Medea's questioning kindness:-

(Like some offender into banishment)".

"Medea. Fausta, what means this sudden flight of yours?

Why do you leave your husband's princely court,
And all alone pass through these thickest
groves.

More fit to harbor brutish savage beasts
Than to receive so high a queen as you?"
"Fausta. I am banished. Medea."

The outcome of the banishment of the Queen, Erminhild, is her father, the Duke of Calabria, seeking revenge for her supposed death; and this coincides with the circumstances attending the supposed death of the Queen Dorothea, in James IV.

We will first consider the part of the play of <u>If</u> dealing with the revenge.

The Duke says:-

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p. 345. " . . Our swordes

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Must from your hearts-blood let out al my wronges,

A murdred daughter for just vengeance cryes,

Whom to appease, your lives weele sacrafize:

Beate the drom.*

When a fight is imminent, the lost Queen, Erminhild, is brought in by the Subprior, who had cared for her in her ban-ishment. She bids them not to fight:-

" . . . Your battailes thus ile part,
The first blow given, shall run cleane through my
heart.

Her graciousness wins the now repentant King Alphonsus:"Oh noble constant maid, forgive my wrongs."

The Duke hears his pledges of faith and ends all his "warres".

Let us compare the above with the plight of Dorothea, the queen who has supposedly been put to death, at the order of her husband, the King of the Scots.

Her father comes for revenge:-

"False traitrous Scot, I come for to revenge
My daughter's death: I come to spoil thy wealth.

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"Since thou has spoiled me of my marriage joy;
I come to heap thy land with carcasses." (1)
And commands:-

"Now trumpets sound a dreadful charge."

But here, as in <u>If</u>, the lost queen comes in and prevents a fight. She is brought by Sir Cuthbert, who rescued and cared for her, and also restores her at an opportune time.

She stays the fight with loyal speech:-

"Touch thou his breast, thou dost attaint this heart."

The King of Scots is repentant and gladly receives

Dorothea, his Queen.

To sum up the romantic element, the identity of circumstances and the likeness of phrasing, point to the fact that Dekker culled these scenes from Greene to weave into his play, and in much the same manner that he had taken the scenes of convivial shoemakers, and the king interceding in the love affair, from the Pinner of Wakefield for his "Shoemaker's Holiday".

The idea of the supremacy of the husband over the wife was common to the popular thought during the Elizabethan



⁽¹⁾ James IV., p. 152, Dyce ed.

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times, and probably influenced Dekker in his selection of the romantic element.

The episode of the ring is likely Dekker's, although the ring as a token was not new in drama. Shakespeare had used it in his Merchant of Venice.

3. The City Thread.

The devil in the hearts of people was the property of all minds.

In the city thread Dekker uses the borrowed motif of a devil in human form corrupting society. The scenes are wholly in London. The devil Lurchall is bound apprentice to a merchant, -

"Who more villenie has by heart" than he has "by rote".

The merchant has yielded to the influence of the demon Lurchall, until his avarice is appalling to the devil himself. Barterville plots heinous crimes of robbery and perjury.

Lurchall in his report at the tryst expresses the conditions in city business life in the portrayal of Barterville:-

p. 327. "I am bartring for one soule, able to lade
An Argory; if Citie-oathes, if perjuries.

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"Cheatings, or gnawing mens soules by usuries,
If all the villanies (that a Citty can),

Are able to get thee a sonne. I ha found that man. "

The part of the play concerning Barterville savors of the atmosphere of that of Marlowe's Jew of Malta (1590).

The comment has been made that -

Marlowe borrowed all the atrocities of this play from some now unknown novel, whose author was willing to flatter the prejudices of his readers by attributing almost impossible wickedness to a son of Israel.(1)

The Jew, Barabas, expresses his character thus:
"Then, after that, was I an usurer,

And with extorting, cozening, forfeiting,

And tricks belonging unto brokery,

I fill'd the gaols with bankrupts in a year,

And with young orphans planted hospitals."

(2)

This Barabas seems to be the prototype of Barterville, as he possesses all the wickedness that Dekker inculcates in his character of Barterville.

⁽¹⁾ Dyce ed. Marlowe.

⁽²⁾ Jew of Malta, Act II.

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In Barterville's plans he proposes to -

p. 322. and

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"Like an executer will I cozen all.

Make creditors Orphans, and widowes spend those tears

They say'de from their late husbands burialls."

The terminations of the two wicked characters present a marked similarity. Barabas plays the traitor and assists the enemy Calymath to enter the city. He then agrees for a reward of £100,000 from the governor, Ferneze, to destroy Calymath and his knights. He resorts to this strategy:-

"First, for his army, they are sent before,
Enter'd the monastery, and underneath
In several places are field pieces pitch'd,
Bombards, whole barrels full of gunpowder,
That on the sudden shall dissever it,
And batter all the stones about their ears,
Whence none can possibly escape alive:
Now as for Calymath and his consorts,
Here have I made a dainty gallery,
The floor whereof, this cable being cut,

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"Doth fall asunder, so that it doth sink Into a deep pit past recovery." (1)

However, the governor turns the tables, and cuts the cable, allowing Barabas to fall through the trap-door into the cauldron, where he dies in agony.

The planned destruction of the monastery may have suggested to Dekker the disposing of the convent with Barter-ville in the flames.

Barterville had also agreed to the treachery of betraying the king to Calabria for 6000 crownes, and the king comes
p. 339. out best.

Barabas and Barterville are each presented to the audience in their counting rooms, both try to keep tribute money, and in each instance it is taken from them. So here are the two cozening, extorting, treacherous, avaricious merchants meeting a like fate, sinking into the fire, an element of demons. The same stage device is used - of sinking through the floor.

The similarity of the names, Barabas and Barterville, and Calabria and Calymath, and their similar associations, all make it probable that Dekker is somewhat indebted to Marlowe.

⁽¹⁾ Marlowe: Jew of Malta. Act V., Dyce Ed. Digitized by Google

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The most stinging satire is against the city, in the character of the merchant who overreaches the devil. The merchant conforms to Dekker's opinion of the usurers and brokers as expressed in his "Dead Tearme" (p. 54):-

"I have both Usurers and Brokers

(who are English Devils)."

Dekker seems to have believed that a man with such an avaricious soul as the merchant's would betray his fellow beings into the enemies' hands and commit treason.

The end, as the beginning, has the scene in Hades. Dekker collected criminals of varying grades, and from different classes. He did not know a more apt disposition to make of them than to have a holocaust. To make the corrupted characters appear black, he puts them alongside the well-known criminals. Fawkes and Ravillac.

He may have had in mind his description of the occupants of Hades, given in his "News from Hell", -

"For all Usurers both Jewes and Christians, after they have made away their Soules for money here, meete with them there againe: You have of all Trades, of all Professions, of all States some there."

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4. Scenes in Hades of If.

Dekker's conception of hell seems to be in keeping with that of Nashe's:-

"Shall I tell thee in a word what Hell is? It is a place where Y soules of intemperate men, and ill livers of all sorts, are detayned and imprisoned till the generall Resurrection, kept and possessed chiefly by spirites, who lye like Souldiers in Garrison readie to be sent about any service into the world, whensoever <u>Lucifer</u>, their Lieftenant Generall, pleaseth." (1)

This expresses the general belief of the time in Hades as a place, with spirits ready to work evil on earth.

Dekker adhered to the old and prevalent belief in the devil as a real existence. He pictures him as conferring earthly favors in order to corrupt the moral nature. He denies him physical pleasures, in accordance with the old belief that the Sabbath dawned before the Creator had time to make them bodies, so they could only lodge in the hearts of people. Satan, on the stage, came as a character from the old miracle plays and moralities, where he was goaded by

⁽¹⁾ Nashe's Pierce Peniless; Vol. II, p. 98.

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Vice.

The opening scene of the play, in hell, with Charon grumbling about fares, seems to have been taken from Dekker's "A Knight's Conjuring", or, as first called, "News From (1) Hell." He uses the same scale of increase in fares over the Styx:-

"For the watermans wages was at first but a half peny, then it came to a peny, tis now mended and is grown to three halfe pence: for all things wax deere in Hell as well as upon earth". - and Charon considers to "raise his price".

Compare this with Pluto's answer to Charon, in the play:"Thy fare was (first) a halfe-peny, then the soules
gave thee

A peny, then three-halfe-pence, we shall have thee

(As market folkes on earth) so dammed deere,

Men will not come to hell, crying out the are heere

Worse racke then the are in tavernes:*

and Charon wants two pence for each soul.

The description of the character of the voyagers over the Styx. in the play, tallies with that in "A Knight's

⁽¹⁾ Dekker's reply (1607) to Nashe's "Pierce Peniless".
Pub. Percy Society, Vol. V, p. 39.

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"Conjuring":-

A Knight's
Conjuring,
p. 44.

"In the olde time men had wont to come into his boate slash't (some with one arme, some with never a leg, and others with heads like calves, cleft to their shoulders), now, contrary wise, his fares are none but those that are poisoned by their wives for lust or by their heirs for living, . . or reeling into Hell out of taverns, their greatest glorie is the stab upon the giving of a lye."

These accounts read like reminiscences from Lucian, when Charon haggles about the fare.

Charon: "Pay me your passage money, you villain",

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Dialogue Menippus: "You can't take from one who has n't

of Charon anything -*

and Men- Charon: "Why! Is there any body who has n't

ippus. an opol?*(1)

(Lucian).

Also in the dialogue with Hermes, Charon makes the com-

"There are but few coming to us at present".

Hermes comments:-

Hermes "What splendid fellows they were who used to come and this way, all men of prowess, quite besmeared with gore Charon. and wounded, most of them. But in these times its ei
(Lucian.) ther some one who has been poisoned to death by his son or wife".

Possibly Dekker drew from Lucian for his "A Knight's Conjuring". But the play reads more like "A Knight's Conjuring" than Lucian.

The final scene in Hades has the traditional judges in the session called by Pluto:-

<u>If.</u> "Seeing our Judges of hell here likewise are p. 353. Sit: call a Sessions: set the soules to a barre,

⁽¹⁾ An obol is three and one-half cents.

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"Minos (the just): Rhadamanth (the temperate)
And Aeacus (the severe). each take his state."

The likeness of phrase is found in Knight's Conjuring, p. 47. in the account of the sessions in hell:-

"The judges are set, (being three in number) severe in look, sharp in justice, shrill in voyce - the prisoners are souls that have committed treason against their creation."

These judges have the same names as in the play.

The final scene is a reminder of Dante's Inferno, in its allusions to punishments and the classes of criminals.

Canto XXI., Dante treats of the "Barters" and "Peculators" who made traffic of their public office for money; also "tyrants and assasins".

Then in Canto XXXII., he speaks of "the frozen realm" and "The doleful shades were in the ice", and "were held up by the hair", and put into a "lake of boiling pitch" (Canto XXI).

In the play Pluto commands:-

"Ducke their soules,

Nine times to th bottome of our brimstone lakes,

p. 351. From whence up pull them by their sindged hayre,

Then hang 'em in ropes of yee nine times frozen o're."

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The whole last scene is fantastically grewsome, and can well be compared to Dante's description of the horrid features of Hades.

Dekker had imitated Nashe in writing his News From Hell, a response to Nashe's Pierce Peniless-; and he tried to succeed Greene in writing guide books to rascaldom and produced the Belman of London. In view of the fact that Dekker is indebted to Nashe and Greene, and made James I. the subject of his comment in his prose writings, we may readily conjecture he would resort to similar sources for material for this play of If.

To sum up the evidence of Dekker's indebtedness, I hold that the story of B. is not a source of the play, but that the Historie of Frier Rush is the source of the main plot, and the direct literary source of the Rush thread of this three-fold plot. The other literary sources are Greene's Alphonsus, King of Arragon, and James IV.; Marlowe's Jew of Malta; Dekker's A Knight's Conjuring, and Dante's Inferno. That these are combined with contemporary history and make up the court and city threads of the play of If, and thus make a triple plot. There are other literary allusions and characters which I will mention later on.

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IV.

THE PLAY IF.

1. The Plot.

In dramatic construction the play is one with a triple plot.

The opening scene presents to the audience the whole scheme of the play. The mainspring of action is the agency of the supernatural.

The three demons, Ruffman, Shacklesoule, and Lurchall, are sent to earth in the guise of human beings, with instructions to corrupt court, city and convent. Hades needs recruits and they are to take advantage of fortuitous circumstances in Naples.

Success or failure must be the outcome of their efforts, and they are to report at a tree in a grove near Naples.

The next scene is the court of Naples. It is coronation day and the king plans tasks for each day in the week, until Saturday is reached: in comes the wily Ruffman as an

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Helvetian, Bohor, and at once sets to work on his mission of corrupting. He lures the king from duty, plunges him into excess of pleasure. Ruffman rises towards success.

Shacklesoule, or Rush, is next seen in the convent, and by the accident of being a novice he is asked to say grace and embraces the opportunity to whet the starved appetites with visions of rich fare, and finds himself installed in full fellowship. However, Rush meets some opposition in the Subprior. This only adds to the complication, as he will have to overcome all opposition to be fully successful.

The king has become so devoted to pleasure that he dismisses Erminhild, his bride. Ruffman still seems in the ascendancy.

In the meantime, Lurchall has played apprentice to a merchant so well that his master has "villanie by heart".

So success seems to be his portion. The complication increases and the demons seem to be anticipating success.

Rush has the most difficulty with the virtuous Subprior. He tempts with rich fare, gold and dancing girls to no avail.

He can only blind the Prior, and add to the comic situation in his treatment of the clownish cook, Scumbroth.

The three threads come together in the scene in the Chan-

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cellor's Court. The King hears complaints against Barter-ville, and the Subprior complains of his irreligious friars. The King is threatened with wars, the result of his unfaithfulness. Barterville resorts to disguise as a Turk. The King seeks safety in a friar's habit. This makes further

complication and success for the demons is close.

The tryst is held for their reports, all seems favorable, - except, the Subprior does not yield. War precipitates the resolution. The King refuses to be further influenced by Bohor, and seeks safety in the convent. Barterville comes as a friar for safety. The Subprior brings about the end when he gives the ring to the Duke and then brings in Erminhild. The King repents and redeems himself. Barterville is lost to all goodness. This may be called the turning point in the plot. The demons have met with varying degrees of success. The Subprior never yielded, but the Prior did. The King yielded for a time. The King ends the earthly career of the demons by having a holocaust.

The plot is boldly planned. The struggle is to overthrow. We might call the action a "losing struggle". The catastrophe comes in the destruction of the monastery. em lock total from a consideration of the ending of models of figures of models of models of the end of the en

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2. Character Study.

In his selections of characters, Dekker has been governed by the motif he chose for the play, and this is the devil in human form corrupting society. Dekker chooses three classes of society, clergy, middle class and nobility, for the playground of his characters. The supernatural is the motive force that brings these classes into relation with each other. The characters are those who are representative of the class to which they belong, and show the influence of the good or evil that they encounter. Their actions give the tone to the play, and make it an expose of the vice and folly in London, and, at the same time, a denunciation of the existing weaknesses. The devil is the trickster who juggles their better natures, but comes out second-best in the end.

These characters are of varying grades of morality.

There is the wholly good Subprior, the yielding sacrilegious Prior, the yielding, but redeemable King, the utterly base merchant, the modest heroine, and there are the vacillating courtiers, the corrupt friars.

Some of the characters are borrowed, while others seem to be Dekker's dramatic creations.



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a. Borrowed Characters.

Alphonso, as has been mentioned, came from Greene's Alphonsus.

Astolfo is a character in Dekker's play "The Honest Whore". Second Part.

Brisco is probably a namesake of Brisk, a lively for devoted to the court, in Jonson's comedy of "Every Man Out of His Humor".

The <u>Duke of Calabria</u> bears the characteristics of the King of England in "James IV.", but a similarity of name to Marlowe's Calymath.

The Friars Hillary and Alphege bear the same names as the familiar Saints Hillary and Alphege

Ravillac and Guy Fawkes are historical characters; the one, the assasin of Henry IV. of France, the other, the instigator of the Gunpowder Plot.

Barterville has a prototype in Marlowe's Jew of Malta, Barabas.

Octavio is the name of a court favorite of James I., who rendered him devoted service.

The spirits, Pluto, Charon, Minos, Aeacus, Rhadamanth,

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are the traditional ones of Hades.

The <u>Subprior</u> bears a close resemblance to the legendary St. Nicholas, who always stepped in and thwarted the efforts of the devil.

Glitterbacke, the golden head, was most likely inspired by the brazen head in "Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay".

Grumball, according to Fleay, is a caricature of Armin. Grumbal, the fiend, was Armin's nickname. Fleay says the name was probably changed to Lurchall in consequence of Armin's death (1611).

Ruffman is the name of a character in Dekker's prose

Rush is the legendary Rush.

Erminhild seems to have been modeled after Greene's heroines.

b. Original Characters.

Narcisso and Spendola are English courtiers dressed up in Italian names.

Jovinelli is the familiar court jester, but of Dekker's coining.



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Scumbroth, the cook, savors of the clownish element of old comedy. He belongs to Dekker's gallery of rogues. His name bespeaks his calling.

The lame soldier is Dekkerian. (Dekker's "Shoemaker's Holiday" has the lame soldier, Ralph.)

His expression. -

"S' bloud if we tosse not them, hang's agen:"
resembles Falstaff. who says:-

"S' blood, an he were, I would cudgel him.

Also, the Soldier has a company of one hundred soldiers, poor in clothes; and this incident recalls Falstaff's ragged company of one hundred and fifty soldiers. (Shakespeare, I Pt. Henry IV., Act III.)

The greedy Prior Dekker readily created, as he was an uncompromising Protestant.

The minor characters were those more or less familiar to Dekker in everyday life.

c. Estimate of Characters.

In this play of <u>If</u> the only character which has a literary value is that of the legendary Rush, and this is not due

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to Dekker.

Dekker has created no dramatic character that lives as has that of Simon Eyre.

The characters play their parts, but they stand for no marked individuality.

The dramatic hero, the King, who should be distinguished for nobility of character, is lacking in personal grandeur.

The heroine Erminhild is modest, but she is not a "Portia." nor a "Viola".

Barterville is too corrupt, and he is not comic.

The cleverest schemers are the three emissaries; but they do not equal "Mephisto".

The play has not lived because of strong characters, but because its characters portray the customs, morals, and manners of the Elizabethan times.

3. <u>Textual Criticism</u>.

Pearson's reprint of <u>If</u> does not divide the play into acts and scenes, nor does it arrange the characters in the usual "Dramatis Personae".

Some of the scenes as printed are not logically placed,

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and some of the parts are assigned incorrectly. I have endeavored to remedy these faults.

a. Dramatis Personae.

Alphonso, King of Naples.

Octavio,)
Astolfo,)

Narcisso, a Courtier.

Brisco, Count.

Spendola, Count.

Duke of Calabria.

Jovinelli, a Jester.

Prior,

Subprior,) Friars in the abbey of the Alphege, Capuchins near Naples.

Hillary,

Scumbroth, Cook of the Friars.

Barterville, a Merchant and Receiver of Public Money.

Far., a Petitioner.

Bravo, a Villain.

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Two Pilgrims. Two Gentlemen. Petitioners. Two Servants of Barterville's. A Lame Soldier. A Mariner. A Scholar. Erminhild, Daughter to the Duke of Calabria and betrothed to Alphonso. Ladies in Waiting. Italian Zany. Charon, Ferryman over the Styx. Ruffman. Emissary to Court as Bohor. Shacklesoule, Emissary to Friary as Rush. Grumball, Emissary to City as Lurchall. Minos. Rhadamanth, Judges in Hades. Aeacus,

Glitterbacke, the golden head, a Spirit.

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Furies, Spirits, Soldiers, Friars, Cpurtesans and Attendants.

Scene, Naples.

b. Division into Acts and Scenes.

The mechanical divisions of the play into acts and scenes is to be made largely from the content.

Being an Elizabethan drama the author does not regulate the scenes with stage effects in mind, as is done in a modern play. So the shifting of scenes is rapid. The letting down of a curtain, the bringing in or taking away a few properties, or the customary placard naming the scene, afforded the Elizabethan dramatist the opportunity to break the continuity and allow for lapse of time in the working out of events.

Accepting the common English usage that a new scene is

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signified when the stage is cleared and a new entrance occurs, I have divided the play into sixteen scenes. Dekker has located some of the scenes, but most of them are to be located from the lines. This division is without corrections in positions of the scenes.

- Sc. 1 (pp. 265 271) Hades.
- Sc. 2 (pp. 271 280) Court of Naples.
- So. 3 (pp. 280 287) Refectory of the Abbey.
- Sc. 4 (pp. 287 295) Court of Naples.
- Sc. 5 (pp. 295 305) Account Room of the City
 Hall.
- Sc. 6 (pp. 303 307) Garden of the Abbey.
- Sc. 7 (pp. 307 308) Court of Naples.
- Sc. 8 (pp. 308 314) Garden of the Abbey at Night.
- So. 9 (pp. 314 322) Chancellor's Court.
- Sc. 10 (pp. 322 325) House of Barterville.
- So. 11 (pp. 325 330) Grove near Naples.
- So. 12 (pp. 330 334) Room in the Abbey.
- Sc. 15 (pp. 334 338) A Street in Naples.
- Sc. 14 (pp. 358 342) Barterville's House.

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So. 15 (pp. 342 - 348) - The Abbey.

Sc. 16 (pp. 348 - 359) - Hades.

The above division into scenes is made for reference in making a division into acts and their respective scenes.

- Act First. Scene I. (Sc. 1.) Hades and Council of Demons.
 - Scene II. (Sc. 2.) The Court of Naples on

 Coronation Day. King

 and Courtiers. Erminhild received.
 - Scene III. (Sc. 3.) The Refectory of the Abbey. The novice and Friars.
- Act Second. Scene I. (Sc. 4.) Court of Naples. The King, and sports.
 - Scene II. (Sc. 5.) Account Room of the City
 Hall. Plans of the Merchant.
 - Scene III. (Sc. 7.) Court of Naples. Ermin-hild dismissed.

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Act Third. Scene I. (Sc. 6.) Garden of the Abbey.

The Friars, and Vines.

Scene II. (Sc. 8.) Garden of the Abbey at Night. Glitterbacke, and gold.

Act Fourth. Scene I. (Sc. 9.) The Chancellor's Court.

Complaints of Subprior.

Complaints against Barterville; Duke demands his Daughter.

Scene II. (Sc. 10.) House of Barterville.

Barterville as a Turk.

Scene III. (Sc. 11.) Grove near Naples.

Tryst of Demons.

Act Fifth. Scene I. (Sc. 12.) Room in the Abbey. Subprior tempted by Rush. Erminhild, and Refuge.

Scene II. (Sc. 13.) A Street in Naples.

Alarm of war. King pursued.

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- (<u>Act Fifth</u>.) Scene III. (Sc. 14.) Barterville's House.

 Barterville a Traitor.
 - Scene IV. (Sc. 15.) The Abbey. Erminhild

 Restored. King Repents.

 Corrupt Friars and Mer
 chants destroyed.
 - Scene V. (Sc. 16.) Hades. Punishment of Criminals. Sessions.

c. Corrections in Text.

1. Scenes Changed.

The scene on pages 330 - 331 when Erminhild enters, to the Subprior, belongs on page 334 after Shacklesoule leaves the Subprior.

In this Erminhild scene, p. 330, the Subprior says:
"O Lady! want of you has bred much woe;

Calamitie does every where ore-flow,

All long of your strange absence."

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And the stage direction follows, - "Drummes afar off marching."

Then on page 331, the Subprior again mentions alarm, and assures her of safety:-

"Subprior. Hearke how the sound of horror beates the Ayre,

Your fathers up in Armes and does prepare
Sharpe vengeance, for this citie, woe is
me. trust you

To me. who were made much of woman yet."

Correctly placed, this scene anticipates the entrance of the King and courtiers in alarm, and recalls the scene of the Subprior's proof against the wiles of dancing girls. This scene on pages 330 - 331 is a continuation of the Subprior scene, as the stage is not cleared. The Subprior remains on the stage through the temptations, and, left alone, Erminhild enters and is granted protection by the Subprior.

The scene on page 307 (Sc. 7) does not logically follow Scene 6. Shacklesoule has planned the coming of the Subprior. Shacklesoule calls up Glitterbacke, the golden head, and says, -

"And dazle th' approching night with thy glistring eyes,"

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and later remarks:-

"Coole night will call Frier Clement forth anon."

Shackle soule expects the Subprior to come to the spring for water, as was his custom, and has placed gold to tempt him. The audience is prepared for this night scene, and Scene 7, with the King and Courtiers on pleasure bent, is wholly out of keeping; besides, Erminhild would not be sent away at night. This scene belongs to the day time and not night.

Scene 8 is a night scene, and the one anticipated in Scene 6; and so Scene 8 should immediately follow Scene 6, and not break the time.

In Scene 4 the King is intoxicated with the feast of pleasures planned by his new favorite. He leaves the stage, expecting more pleasures, as Ruffman says:-

"Will you that gainst to morrow I prepare

p. 295. A Feast of strange Mirth for you."

The King is in anticipation of further pleasures, when in Scene 7 he is besought by Astolfo to, -

"Yet turne backe

And comfort the sad Lady, whose faire eyes
Are worne away with weeping."

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p. 307. "Send her home to the duke her father."

Scene 5, in the City Hall, has intervened and given the King more time to be engrossed with pleasure, and Scene 7, which seems to crown his devotion to pleasure, would naturally follow Scene 5.

2. Parts Assigned.

Page 267. The parts are not assigned correctly in lines 10. 11 and 12.

These lines should read:-

"Cha. Pluto, no wonder if so few hither come."

Plu. Why:

Cha. Gingerly: See See,
One of thine owne promoters."

In line 22, <u>Prod</u>. should be placed before "Charon", as <u>Prod</u>. calls to Charon from within. Charon answers, -

"I come: If I must worke," &c., and leaves the stage.

Page 277. Lines 5 and 6 the parts should be changed to read:-

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"Jov. What hell sayes he?

Spen. Peace you shall know hot hell time enough. "
Spendola, a courtier, would not make the pun on the Helvetian, but a jester would.

Page 281. The line. -

"He has spoken treason to all our stomaches," belongs to the Prior. and not to Shacklesoule.

Page 290. Line 22 belongs to Octavio instead of Brisco.

"Oct. No. no weele ayde you sir."

This is a reply to Brisco's saying:-

"I le fetch these worthy spirits in myselfe."

Page 310. Line 24, after the entrance of Rush, the Subprior continues his monologue, and the part does not belong to Rush as printed.

<u>Page 315</u>. The part, line 9, does not belong to Barter-ville, but to <u>Far.</u>, the petitioner against Barterville, and it should be. -

"Far. Now afore the King

And his Lords here, thou liest."

Page 339. Line 4, the part assigned to the King should be given to Lurchall, as the King was not on the stage, and only Barterville and Lurchall were present. So line 4 be-

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longs with line 5, and should read:-

"Lur. How soone meetes Babels-pride, confusion?
What nest of birds are these new-kild with feare?"
Page 341. Line 26 ascribed to Calabria belongs to

1. 24. "Bar. Thankes to your Grace:

Barterville, and should read:-

1. 25. Las what I did in this, was for no hire.

1. 26. Ha ha, the rent of a cellar never was so deere.

1. 27. Cal. On beate the drum. "

Barterville had the cellar, but Calabria did not know of it.

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longs with line 5, and should read:-

"Lur. How soone meetes Babels-pride, confusion?

What nest of birds are these new-kild with feare?"

Page. 341. Line 26 ascribed to Calabria belongs to Barterville, and should read:-

line 24. "Bar. Thankes to your Grace:

line 25. Las what I did in this, was for no hire.

line 26. Ha ha, the rent of a cellar never was so deere.

line 27. Cal. On beate the drum."

Barterville had the cellar, but Cal. did not know of it.

d. Allusions.

The scene of the play is Naples, but the life represented is wholly that of London. Dekker in no case reproduces life in Naples. He does not even use an Italian phrase, but does affect a few Italian names.

Page 265. "ile first cry garlick" alludes (according to Fleay) to an actor of that name who appeared on the stage with chains of garlic hung round him.

Page 266. Line 6: "Graves-end-barge has more."

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A river port in Knet, England, on the Thames, twenty miles from London.

Page 266. Line 35. "Are fuller of diseases, than of woundes."

alludes to the plague of 1609, in London.

Page 267. "I doe enquire if rich bawdes Carted bee On earth as well as poore ones:"

"Carted" refers to a mode of punishment by conveying offenders through the city. in a cart.

Page 268. Line 17. "A Symon-and-Jude."

A feast day occurring October 28. Also mentioned in "The Roaring Girl", and "Northward Hoe".

Page 268. "In trebble-ruffes like a Merchant."

In 16th century ruffs of muslin or lawn, often edged with lace, drawn or plaited, some six inches broad.

Page 269. "Nor did we know

What a Vacation ment: continuall terme
Fattened hels Lawvers.*

The law terms were formerly the great times of resort to London, not only for business, but pleasure. (Cent. Dict.)

There were four law terms a year, and four vacations.

Page 276. "And on the Burse, see thou thy flag display."



The Royal Exchange in London, built by Sir Thomas Gresham in 1566.

"She says she went to the Burse for patterns."

Middleton and Dekker. Roaring Girl, VI.

Page 274. "Monday's Shoemakers holliday."

Monday was a holiday for the shoemakers of London. The Shoemakers formed one of the twelve Guilds of London.

Page 276. "(got by Symonius gold)"
is a reference to the practice of simony, the crime of selling ecclesiastical preferment. There was a law against it
in Elizabeth's reign. It was named from Simon Magus, because he wished to purchase the Holy Chost with money.

<u>Page 278</u>. "Tilts, turneys, masques, plays, dauncing, drinking deepe."

Sports of Elizabethan times.

Page 278. "Dominical letter", or Sunday letter, one of the seven letters, A, B, C, D, E, F, G, used in calendars to mark the Sundays throughout the year.

Page 283. "A shallow Sophister."

Sophister, a student at Cambridge in the Sophomore year.

Page 289. "A may game bring."

Annual games in England in May. A Ms. of the time of Henry

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VIII. (Harl. Lib., 69) speaks of a Grand May-game at Greenwich which lasted day after day from two o'clock until five, from May 14 to the middle of June.

Page 290. "If Ninies bring away the Nest".

Refers to Robert Armin's "Nest of Ninnies" which appeared in 1608.

Page 297. "The pension of the Stewes."

The brothels of London were licensed and paid tribute money into the treasury.

Page 301. "Proceeds in your chancery suite."
"Chancery", the highest court of justice in Great Britain.

Page 302. "Is for apparence at the Chancellors Court." The Chancellor is judge of the high Court of Chancery.

Page 311. "If that man in the moone should write a prognostication". &c.

Probably refers to Lyly's "The Man in the Moone" (1591).

Also Dekker's Owls Almanack, a merry prognostication; a mode of writing, or droll satire, which prevailed in reign of James I.

Page 302. "All Knights a' th Post learne this trick."

A Knight of the Post, an offender who has been "dubbed" at the whipping post.

 "A knight of the post, quoth he, for so I am tearmed; a fellow that will sweare you anything for twelve-pence."

Nashe. Pierce Penilesse.

Page 320. "This Office of Receiver, I resigne."

Receiver, a person appointed by Chancery to receive and hold money in trust.

Page 327. "this is one of those, who studies the black Art, thats to say, drinkes Tobacco."

I think this alludes to James I. of England, his study of witchcraft, and tirade against tobacco.

Page 329. "For fashions of gowne-wings, laces, purles, ruffes.

Fals, cals, tires, wires, caps, hats, and mufs and pufs.

For so the face be smug, and carkas gay, Thats all their pride. " .

A satirical allusion to the love of fashion and display.

Page 335. Jovinelli says to Alphonso:-

. . : the kingly Lions quaild."

I think this is a fling at James I.

Page 337. "The Capachines Subprior".

The Capuchins were the principal teachers among the Catholics after the reformation.

Page 339. "To raize this Dunkirke seige."

Dunkirk was a seaport in France, besieged by first Spain, then

England.

Page 340. "yland of Hogs and Divels,

(the Barmudas.)"

An account was published, 1610, entitled, "A discovery of the Barmudas, otherwise called the Ile of Divels: by Sir Thomas Gates, Sir George Summers, and Captayne Newport and divers others."

The island was overrun with hogs.

Page 346. "Yes sing

Like Swannes before your deathes. "

A superstitious belief that swans sing just before death.

Shakespeare uses the same superstition:

Merchant of Venice, III, 2; 444.

Othello, V, 2, 247.

King John, V, 7, 21.

Page 352. "Cutlar the Serjeant" is probably the same as Curtilax, the Sergeant in The Roaring Girl.

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Moll Cutpurse. A woman, Molly Frith, a thief, pickpocket, fortune teller; nearly always wore a man's dress.

She was born in London, 1589. Is introduced as a character in "The Roaring Girl."

Page 352. "The bande of Shorditch."

Shoreditch, a district in Hackney, London.

Page 354. "Ravillac".

Refers to Ravillac, the assassin of Henry IV. of France.

Page 356. "Guy Faulx" refers to Guy Fawkes connected with the gunpowder plot of 1605.

Page 358. "Syr Achitophell."

Achitophel, counselor of David, who hanged himself.

Page 359. "Because of Puritanes, Hell can not be cleerd."

A fling at Puritan censors of the stage.

e. Syntactical.

Dekker makes use of the ellipsis more than any other figure in syntax. He omits verbs, pronouns, prepositions and articles. The meaning is apparent to the reader, but is not fully expressed.

The parts selected are those not conforming to present

good usage.

The verbs are omitted in the following:-

- p. 268. "Brave pitchy villaines (are) there."
- p. 271. "You (are) as good as they."
- p. 272. "Kings on earth (are) ever found."
- p. 278. "How (do) like you his counsel?"
- p. 500. "That (is) all my errand."

 (That is) "Worse than a divorce."
- p. 320. "And I (resign) all mine."
- p. 323. (Let it be) "Given out his kinsman lately employed him in Turkey."
- p. 340. "But what (is) your level in this, when this is don."
- p. 352. "ha! he (is) come."

The article is omitted in the following:-

- p. 278. "Al (the) cares of state."
- p. 280. "Your Grace may keepe me (a) prisoner."
- p. 280. "As you are (a) novice."
- p. 285. "How? (A) Sin to feed religious votaries."
- p. 299. "let him beate at (the) doore."
- p. 300. "Talk to me as to (a) Citizen."

- p. 316. "He bleeds at (the) mouth."
- p. 322. (The) "King borrow 3000 Chequins."

 "Make (a) will. name an executer."
- p. 328. "They scorne thy hell, having (a) better of their owne."
- p. 329. (The) "More soules you pay to hell."
- p. 356. "damnation stops (the) throate."

Pronouns are omitted in the following:-

p. 271. "One of those gallant Troupes (that) went forth to meete

• • • • • • • • • • • •

Hath left your Convoy with her. "

- p. 272. "But (they) shew like common men."
- p. 299. "Oh, art (thou) there?"
- p. 308. "Yet (I) am neither."
- p. 311. "What art thou (that) callst me?"
- p. 329. "I doe conjure you sir, by all the bonds (That) Tye you to pious acts."
- p. 333. "Art (thou) come againe?"
- p. 339. "Stay, house beset? what sees?" (- seest thou?)

The prepositions are omitted in the following:-

- p. 270. (At) "The tree."
- p. 275. "Shall not be suffer'd (to) beg here."
- p. 276. "A stranger newly ariv'de (at) your court."
- p. 296. "Weve drunke this day (for) 4 howres."
- p. 302. "when tis there Away (with) you."
- p. 313. "What neede (for) you (to) be at such charges?"
- p. 336. "To leade him out (of) this horrid giddy maze."
- p. 336. "Ile make away (with) myself, and all my sorrowes

 Are made away" (with).

Other misusages also occur.

- p. 273. "I well may doe 't."
- p. 275. "Well to begin, and not end so were base."
- p. 279. "Had bin most vile."
- p. 282. "But do our brethren in parts more remote,

 Feede so delicious saist thou?"
- p. 282. "Thou falsely doest accuse."
- p, 282. "To prove it lawfull gluttonously to feede."
- p. 282. "What shall become of all us then?"
- p. 295. "And thou beest a man bear up."

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- p. 337. "fetched me to be rich Bartervilles confessor, who lyes a dying."
- p. 336. "Why art not thou gon?"
- p. 343. "And Execution certaine Gallants is this morning."
- p. 343. "The Priorie is beset with armed men

 Of which some troupes are entered."

These are characteristic of Dekker's syntax in this play.

4. The Date of If.

The date given in the inscription is 1612. The allusion to events and plays place the writing of the play after 1610. The reference to the assassin of Henry IV. of France, Ravillac, places it after May 10, 1610, the date of the murder. Fleay says, the phrase in scene 2 "the Golden age," alludes to Heywood's "Golden Age", and this was printed, 1611.

If was printed 1612, after it had been acted at the Red Bull Theatre. The date of writing was sometime between May 10, 1610, and 1612.

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5. Time Analysis of If.

It is difficult to calculate the action of the play.

The first three scenes occur on the same day. The coming night is mentioned in the Refectory scene. An interval elapses before the next scene. Extensive preparations have been made for the King's entertainment.

In the scene in the account room Lurchall seems to have been with the Merchant long enough to learn his character and to be familiar with his business affairs. The date of this scene is August 13, as the next scene is the Chancellor's Court on "August 14th", and a night has intervened. The abbey garden scene occurred on August 13.

The next scene after the Chancellor's Court is the tryst of the demons at night. That would make the day following August 15. The Subprior gives refuge to Erminhild, and the war has commenced. The remaining scenes occur on this day, August 15.

The other references to possible dates are the "may-games", "spring-tyde pleasures", and Lambert the martyr's day. But the "spring-tyde pleasures" are mentioned after August 14.

Lambert, the Martyr day, may be April 14, May 26, June

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26, or September 17. None of these dates suit the time in the play, and so cannot determine the action, as it is mentioned on what is evidently August 13.

The May games commenced in May, but often lasted until in June. It can only be concluded that Dekker did not have any regard for the duration of action of the play when he made these references to the games and St. Lambert.

The play seems to have occupied four days in action, and the time represented can only be surmised as being a few days. The supernatural admitted of the rapid working out of events.

The time may be computed thus:-

Day 1, Act I.

Day 2, Act II. - Act III.

Day 3, Act IV.

Day 4. Act V.

6. The Stage History of the Play.

The title page of the edition used in these studies bears this inscription:-

A New Play, as it hath bin lately Acted, with great applause, by the Queenes Majesties Servants: At the Red Bull. 1612."

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The Red Bull Theatre is thought to have originally been an inn yard, and the references to it may throw some light on the standing of If in popular estimation.

Baker savs:-(1)

"Frequent allusions to this house, mostly disparaging, are to be found in the contemporary dramatists who refer to it in much the same strain as did the burlesque writers of our own time to the old Victoria; from which we may gather that its plays were of the blood-and-thunder school, and that its players were the 'perriwig-pated fellows who tore a passion to rags, to very tatters.'"

However the play may have been regarded in Dekker's time, it has survived, and has elicited the opinion of the modern critic, Herford:-(2)

"For boldly planned and all-embracing infernal machinery, the play has no rival in the Elizabethan drama."

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⁽¹⁾ Baker's London Stage, Vol. I.

⁽²⁾ Herford, Literary Relations of Germany and England in 16th Century.

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